



Advanced Degrees, “Upgrades,” and Salary: New Rule Change

A great deal of media attention has recently been devoted to the appropriate role of advanced degrees in raising educator salaries. The intent of this article is to outline an upcoming GaPSC initiative, not connected to legislation or Race to the Top, concerning advanced degrees and certificate level “upgrades.”

Through a policy change anticipated in fall 2010, the GaPSC will propose a new rule that requires advanced degree programs that are used to earn a certificate level “upgrade” to:

- (1) **Be in the field of existing certificates,**
or
- (2) **Result in the addition of a new certificate field** that will add value for the educator’s school or school district.

We believe these changes will:

- a) More directly connect advanced degrees and certificate levels to certificate fields and the educator’s role in the school
- b) Maximize the impact of advanced degrees on educator performance and ultimately on student achievement and school improvement
- c) Encourage local administrators to take a more active role in promoting and encouraging advanced degrees in fields directly related to the educator’s role in the school.

Under the proposed changes, Georgia educators would have two basic options for earning certificate level upgrades:

1. **In-Field:** Educators may earn an upgrade by completing an advanced degree program in a certificate field

they currently hold. For example, a sixth grade mathematics teacher will be eligible for a certificate level upgrade by completing a Masters degree in mathematics or in mathematics education.

2. **New-Field:** Educators may earn an upgrade by completing an advanced degree, state-approved program in a new certificate field. In this case, the educator must meet all certificate requirements for the new field (to include the state content assessment), and formally add the new field to his or her certificate before being eligible for the upgrade.

Several new certificate fields are also being considered as part of this initiative. Certificates in Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Technology, and Teacher Leadership may be created and could be added to already existing certificates by completing appropriate advanced degree, state-approved programs in these areas.

Additional features of the proposed rule would reduce the number of eligible institutions by establishing more rigorous eligibility requirements for the institutions providing the advanced degrees.

In-Field advanced degrees

may be completed at:

- Georgia (in-state) institutions with a GaPSC-approved education unit, or;
- Georgia (in-state) institutions having a Carnegie Basic Classification of “Research University/Very High”

(RU/VH) or “Research University/High” (RU/H), or;

- Out-of-state institutions accredited by NCATE, or
- Out-of-state programs accredited by TEAC, or;
- Out-of-state institutions having a Carnegie Basic Classification of RU/VH or RU/H.

New-Field advanced degrees

may be completed at:

- Georgia (in-state) institutions with a GaPSC-approved program.

(Continued on page 8)



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- Update K-5 Math and Science Endorsement Programs **Page 2**
- Charter School HiQ **Page 4**
- MyPSC Account **Page 6**
- Testing Ethics **Page 7**

FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

A number of upcoming GaPSC rule changes will be initiated over the next few months, and there are three in particular that you need to know about now. The first is the removal of the Computer Skill Competency Requirement as a Special Georgia Requirement. This rule is already initiated, with the 30-day public comment period ending on May 16. The Commission has waived this requirement until the effective date of the rule change on July 15, 2010. The second, targeted for July initiation, will be revisions to the Educational Leadership certificate rule. Based on recent visits with the approved providers and systems, these changes will refine and clarify aspects of the Performance-Based Leadership program.

The third change, also anticipated for July initiation, is a complete redesign of what advanced degrees may be used to “upgrade” certificate levels and earn salary increases. We strongly believe this alignment of pay increases for advanced degrees that are better connected to student achievement will provide a much greater return on the investment for Georgia education. Details of this proposed change are addressed in the lead article on page 1.

The Legislature is still in session as this newsletter is being prepared, but there are several bills that, if passed, will also impact our activities. Details will be on the website for bills signed into law:


- **HB1307 – Suspension of PLU Renewal Requirements** will temporarily suspend certificate renewal PLU requirements for a five-year period. Individuals will still renew their certificates, but PLUs will not be part of the renewal requirement. See the related article on page 5.
- **HB923 – Extended completion of Educational Leadership Degrees** will change the required completion date (and add an enrolled by date) for grandfathering advanced degrees in leadership set last year in HB455. Individuals must have been enrolled by April 1, 2009 and: complete masters degree by July 1, 2012; specialist degree by July 1, 2013; and doctoral degree by July 1, 2014.
- **HB1079 (initially HB1103) – Clearance Certificate** will create an additional certificate based on fingerprint/criminal background checks. This certificate is intended to assure that all educators holding a certificate, license, or permit, including those employed in Charter Schools and IE2 Schools where certification is optional, will come under the jurisdiction of the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators.

Race to the Top: Competing in a race with 41 contestants, surviving a first “cut” to 16 finalists and then finishing third overall is normally quite an achievement. Unfortunately, Georgia’s third-place finish in Phase 1 of the USDOE Race to the Top Grant did not bring home any funding.

Work is underway to revise and improve the plan for submission in Phase 2, which includes about \$3.4 billion. Georgia could receive \$400 million if we finish in the winners’ column. The Phase 2 plan must be submitted by June 1, with finalists announced in August and winners identified in September.

Commission Member Changes: We want to thank Penny Benton, Stephen Dartt, Al George, and Dr. Craig Smith for their dedicated service to the Commission and look forward to working with new members Dr. Adrian Epps (Higher Ed), Bill Haskin (Teacher), Meredith Hodges (Private Sector), and Pam Walker (Teacher).

Sincerely,



Kelly Henson, Executive Secretary
The Georgia Professional Standards Commission



HENSON

Update on K-5 Math and Science Endorsement Programs

The Georgia General Assembly passed House Bill 280 during the 2009 session to enhance math and science instruction in public schools. A portion of HB280, if funding is appropriated, provides annual pay incentives of \$1,000 for educators teaching Math or Science in grades K-5 who successfully complete the K-5 Math Endorsement or K-5 Science Endorsement Program. Educators with both endorsements would receive \$2,000 annually.

The new legislation resulted in rewriting standards to change from the previously existing P-5 Math and Science Endorsement Programs to comply with the new requirements of the K-5 endorsements. These rules were adopted in January 2010 and new programs will

(continued next page)



(continued from page 2)

begin as early as this summer.

Under the new standards, in order to be eligible to enroll in the endorsement programs, participants must have a minimum of one full year of classroom teaching experience and be certified in one of the following fields: Early Childhood Education, Middle Grades Math or Science, Special Education General Curriculum/Early Childhood, or a Special Education field with a core content concentration in Math or Science.

Those who hold the old ECE Math or Science Endorsement will NOT be eligible for the stipend unless they satisfy requirements for the new K-5 endorsements. To obtain the new endorsements, these individuals should contact an approved K-5 Endorsement program provider and submit a portfolio. Based on an evaluation of the portfolio, the program provider will either prescribe additional work to ensure that all K-5 endorsement program requirements are met or recommend the individual for the K-5 endorsement.

Nine program providers are currently seeking GaPSC approval for the K-5 endorsements and approval decision should be made in May. Programs approved by the Commission will be allowed to begin admitting teachers this summer.

Program providers seeking approval include:

- Augusta State University (K-5 Math only)
- Columbus State University
- Georgia State University (K-5 Math only)
- Gwinnett County Schools
- Griffin RESA (K-5 Science only)
- Metro RESA
- Northeast Georgia RESA (K-5 Math only)
- Northwest Georgia RESA (K-5 Math only)
- The University of West Georgia (K-5 Math only)

Other program providers will seek approval for programs to begin in early 2011.

GACE Moving Toward Computer-Based Testing

GACE testing is becoming much more convenient, thanks to the introduction of some computer-based testing (CBT). The first assessment administered via CBT is the Basic Skills Assessment, which was administered in February and April 2010. More GACE assessments are under CBT development and will be added gradually to the growing list of online GACE administrations. The additional cost to examinees over paper-based testing is only \$30 per session.

The regularly scheduled test dates will continue with paper-based tests, but the schedule will be supplemented by the CBT, making the GACE available on dates and *times the examinees select* at Pearson Professional Centers in North America, U.S. territories, and international locations. Georgia Centers are already in place in Albany, Atlanta, Augusta, Macon, and Savannah, with nearby Centers along our state borders in Alabama, Florida, Tennessee, and South Carolina.

CBT testing allows you to:

- Schedule your test at a time that is convenient for you.
- Register up to 24 hours in advance (subject to seat time availability).

- Cancel up to 24 hours in advance and reschedule at no additional fee.
- Receive unofficial score results (Pass/Fail status) at the test center upon test completion of the Reading and Mathematics tests (i.e., multiple-choice-only tests). For examinees who take the Writing test, the unofficial results will indicate that the test was taken.
- Navigate through the test(s) or through items within tests in any order and flag items if you want to go back to them. There is a countdown timer indicating the amount of time left in the test session.
- “Cut,” “copy,” “paste,” “undo,” and “redo” for the constructed response test questions.

Online registration for Computer-Based Testing for the Basic Skills Assessment, as well as additional CBT information, is available via the GACE website at <http://www.gace.nesinc.com>.

If you need assistance with educator testing, please email the GaPSC’s Anne Marie Fenton at annemarie.fenton@gapsc.com or call 404-232-2654.



**Georgia Assessments for the
Certification of Educators®**

New Charter School Guidance Regarding Highly Qualified Teachers

As part of Title II, Part A, GaPSC helps to ensure that all Georgia public school systems reach the federal goal of having 100 percent Highly Qualified teachers and paraprofessionals. Part of this work is examining how to assist LEAs and their charter schools, along with charter systems, in meeting this federal requirement. Georgia law allows for the creation of charter schools where teachers do not have to be certified; however, even though these schools may be able to exempt certification requirements, they cannot exempt federal requirements under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) that call for all teachers who serve as the teacher of record in core academic subject areas to be Highly Qualified.

A GaPSC-led Charter School Task Force collaboratively addressed the NCLB legislative requirement. Representatives from charter schools, school systems, the Georgia Charter School Association, the Georgia Department of Education, and others have worked to assist GaPSC in more clearly defining Title II, Part A Guidelines related to teachers in charter schools. *For teachers in charter schools that DO require certification, the Highly Qualified requirements are no different than for regular public school teachers.*

For teachers in charter schools that DO NOT require certification, to be Highly Qualified, teachers must:

1. Hold a bachelor's degree from a GaPSC-accepted, accredited institution of higher education;
2. Have evidence of subject matter competence in the subjects they teach by:
 - a. An academic major **OR** the equivalent (minimum of 21 semester hours for middle grades; minimum of 21 semester hours for secondary). Exception: Option "a" is not applicable to elementary teachers;
 - b. **OR** a passing score on the state-approved, required content assessment for the area/subjects they teach;
 - c. **OR** meet the requirement of a "high objective uniform state standard of evaluation" (HOUSSE), as adopted by the GaPSC, which is applicable to Veteran teachers who are 1) Multi-subject special education teachers who are the teacher of record for multi-subjects, 2) Retired teachers returning to service, and 3) Life certificated teachers.
3. Have a teaching assignment that is appropriate for the core academic area/subject(s) in which the teacher serves as the teacher of record AND in which the teacher validates his or her Highly Qualified status with an appropriate major, or the equivalent of the major, or a passing score on the State approved, required content assessment for the area/subjects they teach, or HOUSSE requirements, which is applicable to Veteran



teachers who are 1) Multi-subject special education teachers who are the teacher of record for multi-subjects, 2) Retired teachers returning to service, and 3) Life certificated teachers.

The revised Charter School guidance draft is available at <http://www.gapsc.com/EducatorPreparation/NoChildLeftBehind/home.html>

For questions or comments, contact Anne Marie Fenton at annemarie.fenton@gapsc.com or call 404-232-2654.

Proposed Rule Changes to Remove Computer Skills Competency Requirement

CERTIFICATION

During the April Commission meeting, rule changes were initiated to delete the Computer Skills Competency from the Special Georgia Requirements. The proposed changes are posted on our website and the 30-day public review and comment period will end on May 16. The Commission is expected to adopt the rules in June with an effective date of July 15, 2010. In addition, the Commission has formally waived this requirement until the effective date of the new rule ([Click here for more information.](#))

The Computer Skills Competency requirement was established by law in the “A+ Education Reform Act of 2000.” All holders of Clear Renewable certificates, whether prepared in Georgia or out-of-state, have been required to complete a one-time GaPSC-approved course or pass the GACE assessment. Since almost all state-approved programs in the country incorporate technology skills into their programs and local systems provide added professional development in this area, we believe that the time is right to remove this requirement from the Special Georgia Requirements.



New Legislation: PLUs and Certificate Renewal

Legislation has been completed that will temporarily suspend PLU renewal requirements for a five-year period. The intent of the legislation is to provide some temporary relief in the cost of educator’s renewal coursework during the current economic environment.

If signed into law, this measure will be effective July 1, 2010. Educators with Clear Renewable certificates that

| New Certificate Renewal Requirements Summary | | |
|--|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Ending Validity Date | PLU Requirement | New Validity Period |
| June 30, 2010 | YES | July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2015 |
| June 30, 2011 | NO | July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2016 |
| June 30, 2012 | NO | July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2017 |
| June 30, 2013 | NO | July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2018 |
| June 30, 2014 | NO | July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2019 |
| June 30, 2015 | NO | July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2020 |
| June 30, 2016 | YES | July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2021 |

expire on June 30, 2010, will need to satisfy the standard renewal requirements to renew for their next five-year cycle. For educators with certificates that expire between

June 30, 2011, and June 30, 2015, PLU requirements for renewal are temporarily suspended. Further implementation guidelines will be posted on our website.



Certification “101” Training

The certification staff recently completed the initial delivery of “Certification 101,” a two-day training class dealing with the management of Educator Certification at the local system level. Combined registration for the six sessions scheduled for this fiscal year included 233 attendees from 88 school districts.

“Certification 101” covers the basics of certification, Educational Leadership, Express Lane, gapsc.org, House Bill 455, MyPSC, testing/assessments, and the proposed upgrade certificate level rule.

Working closely with the Georgia Association of School Personnel Administrators (GASPA),

regional sites were identified to offer the training in areas convenient to local systems. Five RESA locations were selected: Chattahoochee-Flint, Coastal Plains, Metropolitan (Metro), Middle Georgia, and North Georgia. Due to the overflow of Metro registrants, Walton County hosted an additional training session.

Plans are to revise the certification training based on participant feedback and to conduct the training again next winter. Information will be posted on the website as we get closer to scheduling the next round of certification training.

CERTIFICATION

Have You Created Your MyPSC Account?

In January 2010, we moved from issuing paper certificates to an online certificate view and print process. Educators have electronic notification and secure website access to their certification history, correspondence, and verification of certificate validity dates.

In order to automate the certification process, each certified educator must create an individual MyPSC Account. More than 20 percent of all certified personnel have already established their accounts and are participating in online opportunities and receiving correspondence. Are you one of them? If not, you will NOT be able to receive GaPSC correspondence or print copies of your certificate.

To properly manage your professional certification, it is critical that you **take a few minutes to establish your MyPSC account by visiting our website at www.gapsc.com**.

How to establish your MyPSC account:

1. **Before you begin, you will need your certification ID number/GaPSC account number.** This number can be found on your certificates. If you do not have a current copy of this number, please follow the directions in Step #2. If you do have your Certification ID number, proceed to Step #3.

2. On the GaPSC homepage, click on the blue box entitled "Check Certification Status." Once you are on this screen, type in your first and last names to display your current certificate and Certification ID Number. Print and save.
3. With your Certification ID Number/ GaPSC account number in hand, click on Register MyPSC and follow the directions.
4. You will receive a GaPSC notification email that contains a link to reset the password and a temporary password. The password must be reset before you can log into MyPSC. This e-mail can take up to 24 hours to process after the initial request to register. When resetting the password, select the link within the e-mail first and then answer the security questions. Return to the e-mail, copy, and then paste the temporary password into the Reset Password window. Your password must meet the following requirements:
 - Contain one uppercase letter, one lowercase letter, and one number or special character (can contain both);
 - Have a minimum of eight and a



maximum of 12 characters.

- Your password may NOT contain your first name, last name, GaPSC
 - Account Number/Certification ID or the word "password."
5. Once you have established your MyPSC account, you can view any information pertaining to your certificate through this account. For example, when you renew or upgrade your certificate, your new certificate will be sent through MyPSC.

If you experience any problems, please e-mail: mail@gapsc.com. Type **MyPSC** in the subject of the e-mail. List your name and Cert ID with an explanation of the problem you are having. You may also choose to contact the GaPSC by phone at 404-232-2500. Press 1 and then press 1 again to speak with an information specialist. Please be aware that because of the high volume of calls relating to MyPSC, you will experience longer wait times.



GaPSC and Early Care and Learning

The GaPSC recently established a formal partnership with the Department for Early Care and Learning (DECAL) to continue and expand an established process for verifying credentials for Georgia's Pre-K teachers and childcare professionals. The DECAL Team, comprised of two evaluators and an information specialist at the GaPSC, will verify credentials for educators

employed in public, private, charter and childcare facilities, along with processing career-level assignments to childcare professionals. The goal of this partnership is to utilize the GaPSC's certification expertise to recognize credentials of qualified Early Care Learning educators, and as a result, positively impact the education profession in Georgia.

Ethical Conduct in Student Assessment

Recent news stories about educators and administrators erasing and changing student answers on the CRCT have created a negative image of Georgia educators as being prone to cheat on high stakes tests. The reality is that most of Georgia's educators are committed to upholding the integrity of our profession and acting in the best interest of children, while only a very small percentage of Georgia educators cheat on these tests. Ninety-nine percent of educators sanctioned by the Professional Standards Commission for cheating on tests were reported by these professional educators who support the enforcement of the rules and regulations established by the Georgia Department of Education and the GaPSC.



The following information provides details on the responsibilities of different individuals in the testing process:

- Superintendents have ultimate responsibility and accountability for all testing activities within the local school system. This includes developing and monitoring the implementation and training of all staff members on local policies and procedures to assure test security and appropriate test administration.
- Principals have ultimate responsibility and accountability for all testing activities within their local school. This includes developing and monitoring the implementation and training of all staff members on local policies and procedures to assure test security and appropriate test administration.
- All educators have the responsibility to avoid:
 - Revealing all or any part of copyrighted tests to students or others.
 - Using test items and prompts for instructional purposes.
 - Reviewing or providing answers to test questions.
 - Possessing unauthorized copies of state tests.
 - Varying from the directions outlined in the administration manual.
 - Failing to provide prescribed accommodations.
 - Interpreting, explaining, or paraphrasing the test items.
 - Defining or pronouncing words while administering the test.
 - Coaching students during the test.
 - Providing answers to test questions.
 - Discussing test items or answers.
 - Erasing or changing student answers.
 - Not account for all secure test materials in your possession.

All Georgia educators must be involved in preserving the dignity of the profession. This includes helping to ensure that student assessments are implemented appropriately. Statistical analysis is a starting point for identifying areas of concern for administrators. Administrators and teachers who have the courage and commitment to report individuals employed in education who violate the rules of our profession provide the real basis for proving the cases of unethical conduct by educators in the testing process. The professional educators in Georgia schools have been, and will continue to be, the major force in enforcing ethical conduct in our state. The GaPSC has developed a PowerPoint presentation with participant handouts on appropriate student assessment procedures to support this effort. The material is available on our website at www.gapsc.com.



New Rule Change

(continued from front cover)

- Out-of-state, state-approved programs meeting any one of the three out-of-state criteria listed for in-field.

The proposed rule will also include procedures for grandfathering existing certificate levels and a phased-in timeline to allow educators already enrolled in degree programs to complete their degrees. Input from school systems, teachers and colleges will be solicited as the rule is developed. The current plan is to initiate the rule at the July 8, 2010, meeting. The proposed rule will be posted on the GaPSC website and a 30-day public review and comment period will follow, with the rule scheduled for possible adoption at the September 9, 2010, meeting.

We believe these proposed changes will enable appropriate opportunities for professional development through advanced degrees and certificate upgrades—with appropriate salary compensation—while strengthening the direct connections to student achievement and school improvement.



Master Teachers and Professional Learning

Recognizing Educators Who Get Results

Master Teachers

In addition to the recognition that Georgia Master Teachers receive as Georgia's best teachers, each of these 467 educators also has the opportunity to work with some of the top educational consultants in the nation. The purpose of these learning experiences is to make outstanding teachers even better. In 2010, as a result of the generosity of PAGE and GAE, Master Teachers received advanced training in *differentiated instruction* and *Understanding by Design* in January and will learn more about *student engagement* and high-yield instructional strategies in June.

This January, more than 200 Master Teachers worked with Jay McTighe in a daylong workshop held in four locations around the state. McTighe, along with Grant Wiggins, has developed an organizing framework known as *Understanding by Design* (UBD) that effectively integrates curriculum, instruction, and assessment. McTighe has also collaborated with Carol Ann Tomlinson to blend the elements of UBD with the concepts of *differentiated instruction*.

Some of the comments from the institute attendees were:

- "What another marvelous learning experience. The experience always energizes me to work harder and be better."
- "It was a perfect opportunity to learn and brainstorm new ideas."
- "Our county has been using UBD for a few years. The addition of Differentiated Learning fits in with my personal and school learning goals."
- "I look forward to implementing the things I learned into my classroom. It was the best conference I have been to."
- "I have already shared some of the ideas that we discussed yesterday. I am thankful and humbled to be a part of such a dedicated group as Georgia Master Teachers."

This June, 300 Master Teachers will attend an institute at one of two sites to work with John Antonetti. The focus is on how to improve student learning by designing lessons which employ high-yield instructional strategies to engage students and encourage big idea thinking. Drawing on the work of Robert Marzano, Benjamin Bloom, and Phil Schlechty, Antonetti will work to increase each Master Teacher's capacity to design powerful instructional techniques that improve student learning.

In May 2010, the GaPSC will announce the newest cohort of Master Teachers. Those selected from the 321 applicants will join Master Teachers from 2006-2009 in high-quality professional learning sessions, giving them opportunities to learn, share, and expand their professional practices.